

APPENDIX A

THE URBAN INSURGENT

Cities and towns are vulnerable to urban insurgent violence because they are the focus of economic and political power. Public utilities and services can often be disrupted. Thus, the government may appear to have lost control of the situation. US forces employed in LIC can expect to conduct operations in an urban environment normally in support of the host nation police or military.

A-1. EFFECTS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The concentration of a large number of people in a small area provides cover for the insurgent. However, the insurgent may find support only in certain areas of a town or city. The urban insurgent usually lives in a community that is friendly to him, or the people are too frightened to withhold its support or to inform on him. He has a close relationship with leaders and other insurgents. He may have a communication system using women and children, who also provide cover for other activities.

a. The urban insurgent can operate more boldly than his rural counterpart as reflected by his tactics. The sniper complements the more conventional ambush and often replaces it. Also, explosive devices can be used either as instruments against the community or more selectively against individuals or groups.

b. The availability of a large number of people ensures that crowds can be assembled and demonstrations easily manipulated. The presence of women and children restricts COIN force reactions. A thoughtless reaction can ensure a major incident that provides the insurgent with propaganda. Publicity is easily achieved in an urban area because no major incident can be concealed from the local population. Terrorist successes can be exploited to discredit the ability of the police, COIN force, and civil government, thus providing protection and controlling the insurgents.

c. The urban insurgent cannot, like his rural counterpart, establish bases and recruit large military units. He is an individual and a member of a

relatively small group. He relies on the cover afforded by the people of the city and relies on terror to avoid betrayal. Individuals and small groups are effective in an urban environment because it is easier for them to avoid capture. However, if captured, the terrorist may be able to expose only two or three persons to government or COIN forces.

A-2. INSURGENT TACTICS

The urban insurgent works alone or in small cells. His tactics are different from those of his rural counterpart to include the following:

- a. Disrupting industry and public services by strikes and sabotage.
- b. Generating widespread disturbances designed to extend the resources of the COIN force.
- c. Creating incidents or massing crowds to lure the COIN force into a trap.
- d. Provoking the COIN force into overreacting, which would provide hostile propaganda.
- e. Provoking interfactional strife.
- f. Sniping at roadblocks, outposts, sentries, and individuals.
- g. Attacking vehicles and buildings with rockets and mortars.
- h. Planting explosive devices, either against specific targets or at random, to cause confusion and destruction, and to lower public morale.
- i. Ambushing patrols and firing on helicopters.

A-3. OPERATIONS

Operations against urban insurgents may vary from a passive policy to active. The passive policy

curtails terrorist activities so that community life can continue (under certain constraints). The active policy involves the COIN force seeking out and capturing or killing the enemy. The level of intensity at which operations are conducted are determined by the civil government. Fighting the urban insurgent is a police mission. However, the military COIN force commander may be required to assist the police in this mission or even assume it. The techniques used are like those used in rural areas. Before operations are conducted, information must be obtained about the enemy, his environment, and operations. The techniques include:

- Installation of base defense.
- Roadblocks and checkpoints.
- Crowd dispersal.
- Cordon-and-search operations.
- Patrols.

A-4. MINIMUM FORCE

In an urban environment, the principle of minimum force becomes vital and is related to the ROE. There is greater danger of injuring or killing innocent civilians in heavily populated centers. Clearing operations must be modified to ensure their safety. A grenade tossed into a room before entering may be a violation of the ROE. However, when insurgents are located and isolated, precision munitions may be employed to destroy them. These systems minimize collateral damage and reduce the chance of injury to noncombatants. Since large groups of insurgents are seldom found in cities, there are no base camps—only safe houses. Also, killing or capturing the urban insurgent takes a great deal of time; opportunities for deliberate attacks rarely occur.